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RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0004  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0033  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY 0003  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 7/20/2016

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [LE](#) [IS](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [KIRF](#) [VT](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON/ISRAEL: VATICAN HOPES FOR CEASE-FIRE, NEGOTIATIONS,  
HUMANITARIAN CORRIDOR

REF: VATICAN 142

CLASSIFIED BY: Peter Martin, CDA, Vatican, State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

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New Statement from Vatican  
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11. (U) The Vatican released a new statement (complete text emailed to EUR/WE and in para. three below) on the "worsening situation in the Middle East" this afternoon (July 20). The statement noted the pope's "great concern" for the "destinies of all the peoples involved" and expressed hope for "an immediate cease-fire between the sides, for humanitarian corridors to be opened in order to bring help to the suffering peoples, and for...negotiations to begin to put an end to objective situations of injustice that exist in that region." The statement added that "the Lebanese have the right to see the integrity and sovereignty of their country respected, the Israelis the right to live in peace in their State, and the Palestinians have the right to have their own free and sovereign homeland."

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Comment  
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12. (C) Our sources tell us that the statement was at least in part a result of entreaties by PM Siniora and Saad Hariri to the Vatican in recent days (reftel). Both had urged Cardinal Secretary of State Sodano to call for an immediate cease-fire, a

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humanitarian corridor to Cyprus, and for increased humanitarian aid. They may not have gotten exactly what they wanted, but most of the elements are there. With the pope on vacation and absent from Rome, Sodano has been taking the lead on this issue; today's statement, however, certainly cleared by the pontiff, reflects a more balanced outlook than the Sodano's Friday statement (reftel).  
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Vatican Statement

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¶3. (U) Faced with worsening situation in the Middle East, the Holy See Press Office has been directed to communicate the following:

"The Holy Father is following with great concern the destinies of all the peoples involved and has proclaimed this Sunday, July 23, as a special day of prayer and penance, inviting the pastors and faithful of all the particular Churches, and all believers of the world, to implore from God the precious gift of peace.

"In particular, the Supreme Pontiff hopes that prayers will be raised to the Lord for an immediate cease-fire between the sides, for humanitarian corridors to be opened in order to bring help to the suffering peoples, and for reasonable and responsible negotiations to begin to put an end to objective situations of injustice that exist in that region; as already indicated by Pope Benedict XVI at the Angelus last Sunday, July ¶16.

"In reality, the Lebanese have the right to see the integrity and sovereignty of their country respected, the Israelis the right to live in peace in their State, and the Palestinians have the right to have their own free and sovereign homeland.

"At this sorrowful moment, His Holiness also makes an appeal to charitable organizations to help all the people struck by this pitiless conflict."

MARTIN